

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SY-05 A-01 USSS-00

OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00 USIE-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 OPIC-03

SIL-01 LAB-04 DODE-00 PRS-01 COME-00 SAM-01 SSM-03

EUR-12 L-03 SP-02 AID-05 NSC-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04

OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /100 W  
----- 072707

O R 011430Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 6511

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1154

FOR SECRETARY SIMON FROM AMBASSADOR MURPHY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (SIMON, WILLIAM)

SUBJECT: SECRETARY SIMON'S DAMASCUS VISIT

1. MY STAFF AND I ARE GREATLY LOOKING FORWARD TO  
YOUR WEDNESDAY ARRIVAL AND WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE  
TO MAKE YOUR BRIEF STAY IN DAMASCUS A SUCCESSFUL ONE.

2. I WANT TO ALERT YOU THAT IN YOUR PRINCIPAL MEETINGS  
BOTH PRESIDENT ASAD AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC  
AFFAIRS HAYDAR WILL BE SPEAKING TO YOU THROUGH AN  
INTERPRETER. (ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT WILL PROBABLY  
SAY A FEW WORDS OF GREETING IN ENGLISH AND FOLLOW  
DIRECTLY A FAIR AMOUNT OF WHAT YOU WILL SAY, HE RARELY  
PERMITS HIMSELF TO SPEAK MORE THAN A FEW SENTENCES OF  
ENGLISH.) THE PRESIDENT'S INTERPRETER, ASAD ELIAS, IS  
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HIGHLY ACCURATE BUT SLOW. HE WILL WRITE DOWN EACH WORD

YOU AND THE PRESIDENT SAY BEFORE TRANSLATING YOUR REMARKS.  
THERE IS REGRETABLY NO SHORT CUT TO HIS PROCEDURE.

3. I HAVE FURNISHED BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND HAYDAR A BRIEF  
UPDATED REVIEW OF OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS  
FOR SYRIA ABOUT WHICH YOU WILL HAVE BEEN BRIEFED BY WASHING-  
TON. I DOUBT THAT EITHER WILL DWELL ON THIS SUBJECT WITH  
YOU, ALTHOUGH HAYDAR MAY, IN JOCLAR VEIN, COMMENT THAT  
THEY WOULD WELCOME AND BE ABLE TO USE A PROGRAM 10 TIMES  
AS LARGE.

4. DURING THE PAST 27 MONTHS OF FORMAL SYRO-AMERICAN  
CONTACTS, BEGINNING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FIRST  
VISIT IN DECEMBER 1973, OUR EXCHANGES WITH THE SYRIAN  
LEADERSHIP HAVE LARGELY FOCUSED ON QUESTIONS DIRECTLY  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS. THE SYRIANS  
ARE KEENLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE TO THIS PROCESS OF OUR  
POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL AND HAVE BEEN CORRESPONDINGLY  
EAGER TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS ABOUT OUR  
MIDDLE EAST POLICY. WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS THIS LEADERSHIP  
HAS OTHERWISE A LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICA, BE IS OF  
THE WORKINGS OF OUR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROCESS OR THE  
NATURE OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY.

5. THEY SPEAK OF THEIR INTENTION TO MAINTAIN A VITAL  
PRIVATE SECTOR IN SYRIA BUT THAT SECTOR HAS LONG SINCE  
BEEN RELEGATED TO A MINOR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE PUBLIC  
SECTOR GOVERNED BY A HOST OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. SUPPORT  
FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S DOMINANCE IS A MATTER OF FAITH AND  
DOCTRINE WITH THE RULING BAATH PARTY. (ONE OF THE MANY  
ACCUSATIONS IN FACT THEY ARE MAKING OF SADAT THESE DAYS IS  
THAT HE IS CONSPIRING TO BRING BACK DISCREDITED EGYPTIAN  
CAPITALISTS AND DESTROY NASSER'S STRUCTURE OF "ARAB  
SOCIALISM.")

6. AT THE SAME TIME THE SYRIANS ARE A PRAGMATIC  
LOT AND ANXIOUS TO BENEFIT FROM OUR TECHNOLOGY. THEY HAVE  
WARMLY RECEIVED OUR AID OFFICIALS AND OUR PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN  
DESPITE THE FACT THAT YEARS OF WORKING WITH SOVIET AND EASTERN  
EUROPEAN DELEGATIONS ON TRADE ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS HAVE  
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UNQUESTIONABLY LIMITED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW OUR ECONOMY  
WORKS. THIS HAS TENDED TO SLOW DOWN MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE  
CLOSER COOPERATION WHICH WE ARE BOTH SEEKING TO CREAT. I MENTION  
THIS ONLY TO ALERT YOU TO THE OPPORTUNITY YOU WILL HAVE, AND  
TO THE ADVANTAGES I BELIEVE IT WOULD BRING, WERE YOU TO FIND  
AN OPENING TO EMPHASIZE OUR INTEREST IN CLOSER ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION WITH THIS COUNTRY, WHOSE ECONOMY RESTS ON A  
STRONG AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION, WHICH IS TRYING TO MECHANIZE

ITS AGRICULTURE AND GENERALLY TO INDUSTRIALIZE AS QUICKLY  
AS POSSIBLE.

7. YOU WILL FIND THE PRESIDENT INTERESTED IN ANY COMMENTS  
YOU MAY WISH TO MAKE ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF THE AMERICAN  
ECONOMY.

8. THERE IS ONLY ONE TOPIC I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST YOUR  
RAISING DURING YOUR TALKS HERE: ANY SUGGESTION OF A US ROLE  
IN ENCOURAGING THE OIL-RICH ARAB STATES TO CONTRIBUTE TO  
SYRIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS WE HAD A  
MISUNDERSTANDING WITH THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP LAST YEAR ON  
THIS ISSUE. AT THAT TIME THEY MADE IT AMPLY PLAIN THAT  
SECURING ARAB RPT ARAB ASSISTANCE FOR THEIR ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT IS A SUBJECT WHICH LIES SOLELY WITHIN SYRIA'S  
COMPETENCE TO EXPLORE AND IN WHICH WE HAVE NO ROLE TO  
PLAY.  
MURPHY

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**To:** TEL AVIV  
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